

Environmental Water Program
Update Number 3
3/1/04

The following is the third installment of the EWP Update. These updates are intended to be brief overviews of significant actions and notification of upcoming meetings and significant dates. For background information on the EWP, please visit our web site at <http://www.calfedewp.org/>. If you would like more detailed information or have questions, please contact Campbell Ingram at (916) 414-6727 or email campbell_ingram@fws.gov.

Programmatic Update

It is important to note that the EWP is currently the face of the ERP and is working out in the priority watersheds to implement the Program. As such, we have committed to an open, transparent stakeholder process and continue to work to develop locally supported opportunities to increase instream flow on the priority tributaries. To date our team has put on over 15 public stakeholder workshops, dozens of smaller meetings with individual stakeholders, and many internal meetings to coordinate these efforts. We believe our efforts are paying off as evidenced by the increasing level of trust among stakeholders in the priority watersheds. This has been our most difficult task. Local opinion related to water acquisition and government programs located in Sacramento can be characterized as nothing less than hostile. One measure of our success in developing and implementing a program that is acceptable to local interests is the absence of complaints to agency leadership about the program; another is the continued participation of large diverse stakeholder groups in each priority watershed. We believe that absent this extensive outreach and arduous relationship building process, we would not be able to move this Program forward.

The EWP Core Team met on January 12, 2004, to discuss the transfer of funds to support Battle Creek work and future EWP actions, report on progress by stream, and discuss long term funding for the EWP. Meeting notes are available by request.

The Core Team met again on February 23, 2004, to review Program planning costs and service contracts.

Priority Stream Update

Clear Creek

- A third Local Team meeting was held on January 27th to report back on the refinement of biological objectives for increased flow on Clear Creek that were developed at the December 16th meeting of a subgroup of biologists. Notes from that meeting are available by request.
- The biologist subgroup met again on February 20th to further define the biological objectives. The subgroup consists of Mike Berry, Howard Brown, Matt Brown, Trisha Bratcher and Serge Birk, with assistance from EWP staff.

- The next Local Team Meeting is scheduled for March 11, 2004, at 6:00 p.m. at the Western Shasta RCD. Purpose: to present the output from the biologist's meetings and come to agreement on objectives for a proposal.
- A meeting was held with the Central Valley Operators on February 19th to discuss the feasibility of flow manipulations in support of Local Team objectives.

Mill Creek

- No change since last update.

Deer Creek

- The Deer Creek Local Team met on January 8th and again on February 11th. At the January 8th meeting it was noted that the Stanford Vina Ranch Irrigation Company Board (SVRIC) still had reservations about participating in the Program. We met with the SVRIC Board on January 14th to discuss their participation. At the February 11th meeting the EWP reported back that according to the SVRIC articles of incorporation and bylaws, it appeared that SVRIC could bypass water for the environment, but that we provide a legal opinion from the Department of Interior Solicitor at the next meeting. Also discussed were a recent report assessing the efficiency of the Deer Creek Irrigation Districts system, and an overview of the role of the Lead Scientist and proposed biological objectives. There is still significant apprehension on the part of 2 of 5 SVRIC board members. Notes from recent meetings are available on request.
- The main focus of effort on Deer Creek will be securing water at critical times through conservation and potential expansion of the Groundwater Pilot Project. The EWP will provide a focal point for development of proposals to multiple programs, development of lease agreements for instream use of conserved water, and development of an adaptive management and monitoring program.
- The next Local Team meeting is scheduled for March 24, 2004, at 6:00 p.m. at the Community Center in Vina. Purpose: To continue to encourage SVRIC to participate and develop objectives for increased flow.

Butte Creek

- A third Local Team meeting was held on January 28th to discuss biological objectives for increased flow on Butte Creek. The results of the December 19th biologist's subgroup meeting were presented. The objectives for the upper creek were discussed at length, but there was not enough time to discuss the objectives for the lower creek. The group agreed that the best objective for the upper reach was to develop a temperature model to better understand the flow/temperature interactions. PG&E with FERC will examine the need for such a model at their meeting in March. Notes from this meeting are available on request.
- The next Local Team Meeting is scheduled for March 31, 2004, from 1:00 p.m. at the Western Canal Water District Headquarters. Purpose: to present the objectives for the lower creek and discuss outcome of the PG&E/FERC meeting.

Tuolumne River

- We have re-energized a process to address flow on the Tuolumne through a cross program effort. Working with Jeff McLain, FWS Habitat Restoration Coordinator for the Tuolumne, we are developing a concept paper that will be distributed to CBDA elements for comment prior to presentation to the Tuolumne River Technical Advisory Committee (TRTAC) and TID/MID management. We hope to make the presentation to the TRTAC sometime in March or April.

Battle Creek

- To date, the EWP team has provided the Adaptive Management Technical Team (AMTT) with the following products: general comments for the revision of the AMP, multiple conceptual models, a sediment monitoring special study, a juvenile habitat usage special study, an updated linkages section, and an operating procedures section all for inclusion in the revised AMP.
- Next Steps: We are currently waiting for further direction from the AMTT. Recent comments by the ERP Technical Panel and the Hatchery Science Panel may result in additional effort.